

Teachers' Challenges in Communicative Language Teaching: A Focus on Speaking and Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in public secondary schools, with particular focus on the challenges encountered by English teachers in teaching speaking and writing. Using a qualitative descriptive research design with a phenomenological approach, the study involved ten Junior High School English teachers from Mobo South District, Division of Masbate Province. Data were gathered through a validated semi-structured interview guide and analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed that teachers generally perceived CLT as a learner-centered and communication-driven approach that promotes fluency, confidence, interaction, and real-life language use. Teachers implemented CLT through role plays,

simulations, discussions, group work, problem-solving tasks, real-life contexts, authentic materials, and technology-supported activities. However, several challenges affected its implementation, including learners' low English proficiency, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, large class sizes, limited time, curriculum and assessment misalignment, and lack of resources. Despite these challenges, teachers adapted their practices through differentiated activities, feedback, process-based writing, technology use, peer collaboration, and supportive classroom strategies. The study concludes that effective CLT implementation requires sustained teacher training, curriculum and assessment alignment, access to authentic and digital resources, and stronger institutional support.

Keywords: *Communicative Language Teaching, speaking, writing, English language teaching, public secondary schools, qualitative research*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking and writing are central productive skills in English language learning because they allow learners to express ideas, emotions, opinions, and information in meaningful ways. Speaking enables immediate interaction, negotiation of meaning, and oral expression, while writing requires the organized and coherent presentation of ideas through text (Reyes & Tuazon, 2021; Gordoncillo, 2022). These skills are essential not only for classroom performance but also for social participation, academic success, and professional communication (Al-Mahrooqi & Roscoe, 2019). In the context of 21st-century education, learners are expected to communicate effectively, participate in discussions, produce written outputs, and use English confidently in real-life situations (Trilling & Fadel, 2015; Boholano, 2017).

To respond to these communicative demands, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has become one of the major approaches in English language education. CLT emphasizes meaningful communication rather than the mere memorization of grammatical rules. It views language learning as an interactive process in which learners develop communicative competence through authentic tasks,

collaboration, and purposeful language use (Richards, 2015). Hymes (1972) explained that communicative competence involves not only knowing the rules of grammar but also understanding when, how, and to whom language should be used appropriately. In this sense, CLT aims to develop learners' grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence through classroom experiences that reflect real-world communication (Savski, 2019).

In classroom practice, CLT encourages the use of authentic materials, real-life tasks, learner interaction, and collaborative activities. These may include role plays, simulations, interviews, debates, group discussions, problem-solving tasks, peer feedback, and process-based writing activities (Al-Maamari, 2021; Akbar & Picard, 2022). Through these strategies, learners are given opportunities to use English actively rather than simply study it as a set of rules. CLT also integrates the four macro skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—within communicative situations, allowing students to develop language ability in more natural and meaningful contexts (Tian & Appel, 2020).

Several studies have affirmed the value of CLT in improving learners' confidence, motivation, creativity, and communicative performance. Role plays, task-based activities, and collaborative learning have been found useful in promoting spontaneous language use and oral fluency, while process-oriented writing strategies help learners plan, organize, revise, and refine their written outputs (Hsu, 2017; Kassem, 2018). Similarly, Ghaith (2018) emphasized that CLT-oriented classrooms promote learner engagement and retention through authentic and collaborative tasks. These findings suggest that CLT can support the development of both speaking and writing skills when implemented with clear objectives, appropriate materials, and sustained teacher guidance.

Despite its pedagogical value, the implementation of CLT remains difficult in many school contexts. Teachers often face barriers such as limited professional training, insufficient instructional materials, large class sizes, limited time for communicative activities, and curriculum or assessment pressures (Genc & Aydin, 2017; Thanh & Huan, 2021). In some classrooms, teachers may return to grammar-focused and teacher-centered instruction because of examination demands, classroom management concerns, and learners' reluctance to participate in open-ended communication tasks (Nguyen & Boers, 2020; Oladejo, 2021; Yu & Wang, 2021). These difficulties are especially evident in the teaching of speaking and writing, which require continuous practice, confidence-building, constructive feedback, and active learner participation.

In the Philippine educational context, CLT is consistent with the goal of developing communicatively competent learners under the K to 12 curriculum. The curriculum promotes learner-centered instruction and encourages English teachers to use strategies that help students use language meaningfully in academic and real-life situations (Bargo & Go, 2021). However, local studies show that a gap remains between the theoretical acceptance of CLT and its actual classroom implementation. Filipino English teachers may recognize the importance of communicative instruction, yet their practice is often limited by insufficient training, scarce resources, large class sizes, rigid curricula, and traditional classroom expectations (Diaz & Serino, 2022; Villanueva, 2021). Salazar (2019) further noted that cultural factors, such as students' passive learning habits and teacher-centered classroom norms, may also affect participation in communicative activities.

In rural and resource-limited settings, these implementation issues may become more pronounced. In the Mobo South District, Division of Masbate Province, CLT has gradually entered English classrooms as teachers adopt more interactive and student-centered practices. Teachers use group work, role playing, oral presentations, discussions, and writing activities to encourage students to communicate in English. However, the extent to which CLT is understood and consistently implemented may be shaped by class size, instructional materials, teacher preparation, students' English exposure, and the realities of teaching in a rural public-school context.

This study was anchored on Hymes' Theory of Communicative Competence, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge. Hymes' theory supports the study

by emphasizing appropriate language use in real-life contexts, which is central to CLT. Vygotsky's theory highlights the role of social interaction, scaffolding, and guided participation in language learning, while Shulman's theory explains how teachers combine content knowledge and pedagogical strategies to make instruction meaningful and responsive to learners' needs. Together, these theories provide a strong lens for examining how teachers understand, practice, and experience CLT in teaching speaking and writing.

Although CLT has been widely studied in different educational contexts, limited localized research has examined how public secondary school English teachers in the Mobo South District perceive, implement, and experience CLT. Existing studies often discuss CLT in general language instruction, but fewer studies focus specifically on teachers' challenges in applying CLT to speaking and writing, which are productive skills that require confidence, interaction, linguistic control, and sustained instructional support. This study addresses this contextual and skill-specific gap by exploring the actual experiences of English teachers in implementing CLT in rural public secondary schools.

Therefore, this study explored the challenges encountered by public secondary school English teachers in implementing Communicative Language Teaching, with specific focus on speaking and writing. It examined how teachers perceive and interpret CLT, what classroom practices and activities they use, and what difficulties they encounter in applying the approach. The findings may provide useful insights for teachers, school heads, curriculum planners, and education supervisors in designing relevant training programs, instructional support mechanisms, and school-based interventions that can strengthen the implementation of CLT in public secondary schools.

Research Questions

This study primarily aimed to determine how Communicative Language Teaching is implemented in public secondary schools and to identify the challenges that teachers encounter in utilizing CLT.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do teachers perceive and interpret Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)?
2. What classroom practices and activities do teachers implement in Communicative Language Teaching?
3. What challenges do teachers encounter in implementing Communicative Language Teaching, particularly in teaching Speaking and Writing?
4. Based on the findings, what recommendations can be proposed?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design using a phenomenological approach to explore how public secondary school English teachers perceived, implemented, and experienced Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), particularly in teaching speaking and writing. Qualitative descriptive research was appropriate because the study aimed to provide a clear and comprehensive description of teachers' perceptions, classroom practices, and challenges based on their actual experiences. This design allowed the researcher to remain close to the participants' responses and present the findings in a manner that reflected the realities of classroom implementation.

The phenomenological approach was used because the study focused on the lived experiences of teachers as they implemented CLT in their respective English classes. Through this approach, the study sought to understand the shared meanings, interpretations, and challenges experienced by teachers in using CLT in public secondary school classrooms. The design was suitable because the study did not aim to measure the statistical effectiveness of CLT, but rather to describe how teachers understood, applied, and responded to the demands of communicative language instruction.

The main instrument used in the study was a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide. The guide was developed to gather data on the teachers' perceptions and interpretations of Communicative Language Teaching, their classroom practices and activities, and the challenges they encountered in implementing CLT, particularly in teaching speaking and writing.

The semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to ask prepared questions while also giving participants enough freedom to elaborate on their responses. This made it possible to obtain rich, detailed, and experience-based data from the teachers. The interview guide underwent content validation by two academic experts in English language education and qualitative research to ensure that the questions were clear, relevant, and aligned with the objectives of the study.

The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method was appropriate because the study aimed to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and themes from the teachers' responses regarding their perceptions, classroom practices, and challenges in implementing Communicative Language Teaching.

Following the procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher first familiarized himself with the data by repeatedly listening to the audio recordings and reading the interview transcripts. Significant statements related to the research questions were then identified and coded. Similar codes were grouped together to form categories, and these categories were further analyzed to generate themes and sub-themes.

The study observed standard ethical protocols throughout the research process. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the procedures involved in the interview. They were also assured that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Participant codes were used instead of real names, and all recorded interviews, transcripts, and related documents were stored securely. The information gathered from the participants was used only for academic and research purposes. Informed consent was obtained before the conduct of the interviews, and the researcher ensured honesty, respect, and transparency throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the findings.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in the Mobo South District, Division of Masbate Province. The district is composed of public secondary schools offering Junior High School education and is situated in a rural educational context where English teachers are continuously challenged to make language instruction more interactive, meaningful, and learner-centered. The locale was considered appropriate for the study because it provided a context where Communicative Language Teaching is gradually being adopted as part of efforts to promote more student-centered English instruction.

In this setting, English is not the first language of many learners, and students may have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. These contextual realities make the implementation of CLT both relevant and challenging. The rural school context, available instructional resources, class conditions, and teachers' professional preparation were considered important factors in understanding how CLT was perceived and practiced in the teaching of speaking and writing.

Sampling Technique

The participants of the study were ten (10) public secondary school English teachers handling Junior High School classes in the Mobo South District, Division of Masbate Province. Complete enumeration was used because all English teachers who met the inclusion criteria within the district were included in the study. This sampling approach was appropriate because the target population was small, specific, and accessible, allowing the researcher to gather data from all qualified participants.

Ethical Considerations

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Perception and Interpretation of Communicative Language Teaching

The first research question explored how teachers perceive and interpret Communicative Language Teaching. The analysis revealed six major themes: understanding Communicative Language Teaching, goals and effectiveness of CLT, alignment with teaching philosophy, comparison with traditional methods, assessment in CLT, and unconscious use of CLT. Across these themes, teachers viewed CLT as a learner-centered approach that promotes communication, interaction, real-life language use, and meaningful participation. However, the findings also suggest that some teachers practiced CLT strategies intuitively without fully recognizing their theoretical basis.

Theme 1: Understanding Communicative Language Teaching

Teachers generally understood CLT as an approach that prioritizes communication and active student participation. Under this theme, three subthemes emerged: CLT as communication-focused, CLT as student-centered, and CLT as involving all macro skills. The participants associated CLT with helping learners use English meaningfully rather than merely memorizing grammatical rules. Participant 1 described it as a way to “develop communication skills of learners,” while Participants 2 and 10 emphasized that it helps students “use the language to communicate effectively.” Participant 6 similarly viewed CLT as “using the language naturally.”

The teachers also perceived CLT as student-centered because it gives learners opportunities to participate in oral communication and real-life interaction. Participant 3 emphasized using CLT “inside the classroom to practice oral communication,” while Participants 4 and 9 connected it with “interaction and real-life communication.” In addition, Participants 5 and 8 noted that CLT involves other macro skills such as “writing, reading, and listening,” showing that teachers did not limit CLT to speaking alone.

These findings indicate that teachers had a functional understanding of CLT as an approach that develops communicative competence through meaningful and integrated language use. This suggests that their perception of CLT is already aligned with its central principle: language is best learned when used for authentic communication. However, their understanding still needs to be deepened through professional learning so that CLT can be implemented more intentionally and systematically.

Theme 2: Goals and Effectiveness of CLT

The second theme focused on the perceived goals and effectiveness of CLT. The subthemes were developing fluency, building confidence and comprehension, and preparing learners for real-world language use. Teachers viewed CLT as effective because it allows learners to use English repeatedly in meaningful situations. Participants 2 and 8 associated CLT with “fluency, interaction, and confidence,” while Participant 4 stated that it enhances “fluency and comprehension” through meaningful interaction.

Confidence-building was also strongly emphasized. Participant 3 noted that CLT helps learners “achieve confidence in using English,” while Participants 6, 9, and 10 observed that “students become more confident” when exposed to communicative activities. Teachers also saw CLT as useful beyond the

classroom, as Participants 5 and 8 stated that it develops students' ability to use English "in various real-life situations."

These findings suggest that teachers value CLT not only for improving oral participation but also for strengthening learners' confidence, comprehension, and practical language use. In the context of speaking and writing, this is important because both skills require sustained practice, feedback, and opportunities for authentic expression. The finding implies that CLT is perceived by teachers as a useful approach for developing learners who can use English meaningfully in academic and real-life contexts.

Theme 3: Alignment with Teaching Philosophy

The third theme revealed that CLT aligned with the teachers' beliefs about effective language teaching. The subthemes were support for learner-centered beliefs and meaningful learning. Participants described CLT as consistent with their view that students learn best when they actively use the language. Participant 1 stated that CLT helps "learners to be communicative using the English language," while Participant 4 linked it with "student-centered learning and real-world language use." Participant 6 added that "students learn best when they are actively using the language."

Teachers also believed that language learning becomes meaningful when students are given opportunities to practice. Participants 5 and 10 expressed that "learning without practice is... stagnant," showing that they viewed actual language use as essential to learning. This reflects a teaching philosophy that values application, participation, and learner engagement.

This finding suggests that the teachers' beliefs already support the principles of CLT. Since they value student participation and meaningful practice, they have a favorable foundation for implementing communicative instruction. The implication is that professional development should build on these existing beliefs by helping teachers translate their learner-centered philosophy into more structured CLT practices.

Theme 4: Comparison with Traditional Methods

The fourth theme showed how teachers distinguished CLT from traditional methods. The subthemes were traditional methods as grammar-focused and passive, and CLT as interaction-focused. Teachers associated traditional instruction with grammatical accuracy, teacher-led drills, and limited student participation. Participant 1 described traditional instruction as "strict in grammatical accuracy," while Participants 4, 8, and 10 linked it with "teacher-led drills." Participant 5 added that students are often expected to "just sit and listen."

In contrast, CLT was viewed as more active and communicative. Participants 1, 2, and 6 described it as "student-centered and focuses on communication." This comparison shows that teachers recognized CLT as a shift from passive reception to active language use. They understood that CLT gives learners more opportunities to interact, express ideas, and use English in meaningful contexts.

However, this finding also reveals a continuing tension between communicative instruction and traditional expectations. While teachers value CLT, grammar accuracy, curriculum coverage, and assessment pressures may still influence how English is taught. The implication is that CLT implementation should not disregard grammar, but grammar instruction should be embedded in communicative tasks rather than taught only through drills and passive activities.

Theme 5: Assessment in CLT

The fifth theme focused on how teachers assessed students within CLT-based instruction. The subthemes were performance-based assessment, use of rubrics and observation, authentic tasks, and formative assessment. Teachers used assessment practices that required learners to demonstrate actual language use. Participant 1 mentioned "Role Plays, Speeches, Panel Discussions and Written Works," while Participant 2 used group presentations "to assess their fluency." Participant 3 cited "role play, debates and group discussions," and Participant 7 shared that students "record themselves while speaking or doing conversations."

Teachers also used rubrics and observation to assess communicative performance. Participant 6 mentioned rubrics focusing on “clarity” and “fluency,” while Participants 2 and 10 referred to observation, speaking tasks, and writing tasks. Authentic assessment was also evident through “real-life simulations,” “peer activity,” and “authentic communication” such as question-and-answer tasks. Participant 6 explained, “I observe how well they interact in group activities,” while Participant 4 stated that checking participation in speaking tasks helped determine students’ progress.

These findings show that teachers assessed communicative competence through actual performance rather than relying only on paper-and-pencil tests. Their practices were consistent with CLT because they measured fluency, clarity, interaction, participation, and authentic language use. The implication is that CLT assessment should continue to emphasize performance tasks and formative feedback, especially in speaking and writing where learners need continuous practice and guidance.

Theme 6: Unconscious Use of CLT

The sixth theme revealed that some teachers were already using CLT-aligned practices without consciously identifying them as CLT. Participant 5 shared, “I’m not conscious that I’m already using the CLT approach because I let my students communicate in English most of the time.” Participant 2 similarly stated, “I thought CLT was a new method, but I realized I’ve already been doing some of its activities.” Participant 4 explained, “I’m familiar with those strategies... but I didn’t know they are part of CLT,” while Participant 7 shared that encouraging students to talk and use the language was learned “from experience, not training.”

This finding indicates that some teachers’ classroom practices were communicative even without formal awareness of CLT as a theory or named approach. Their experiences show that CLT may already be present in their teaching through activities that promote interaction, speaking practice, and real-life language use. However, the lack of formal recognition suggests a gap between practice and theoretical understanding.

The implication is that teacher training should not simply introduce CLT as if teachers have no prior experience with it. Instead, professional development should help teachers identify the communicative value of the strategies they already use, connect these practices with CLT principles, and refine them into more deliberate and systematic instruction.

Overall, the findings for the first research question show that teachers perceived CLT positively and associated it with communication, learner participation, fluency, confidence, real-life language use, and performance-based assessment. They also distinguished CLT from traditional grammar-focused instruction and recognized its value in teaching speaking and writing. However, the unconscious use of CLT suggests that teachers need more structured professional development to strengthen their theoretical understanding and improve the intentional implementation of communicative language teaching.

Classroom Practices and Activities Implemented by the Teachers in Communicative Language Teaching

The second research question examined the classroom practices and activities implemented by teachers in Communicative Language Teaching. Four major themes emerged from the participants’ responses: common CLT activities, real-life context integration, instructional materials used, and fluency and accuracy balance. These themes indicate that teachers applied CLT through interactive tasks, contextualized language use, authentic materials, technology-supported instruction, and flexible approaches to developing both fluency and accuracy.

Theme 1: Common CLT Activities

The first theme shows that teachers implemented a variety of communicative activities to encourage students to use English actively in the classroom. The subthemes under this theme were role play and simulation, debate and discussion, group and peer work, problem-solving tasks, and warm-up and reflection

activities. These practices show that teachers used CLT not as a fixed method but as a set of interactive strategies that allowed students to communicate, collaborate, and respond to meaningful situations.

Role play and simulation were among the most frequently mentioned activities. Participant 1 identified “Speeches, Role Plays and Essays” as part of classroom practice, while Participant 2 stated, “I use activities like role play, discussion, interview, games, and real-life simulations.” Participant 8 also described the use of “scenario cards” where students acted out situations such as “making a complaint or resolving a problem.” These statements show that teachers used role play and simulation to help students practice English in situations that resemble everyday communication.

Debate and discussion were also used to develop students’ ability to express and defend ideas. Participant 5 shared, “Sometimes I give them activities like debate,” while Participant 8 stated, “Discussion and debate... I practice that.” Participant 10 also mentioned “opinion sharing, performance tasks or role plays.” These activities provided students opportunities to organize thoughts, express viewpoints, listen to others, and respond using English.

Group and peer work also appeared as a common practice. Participant 1 shared, “I integrate group or pair work,” while Participant 2 explained that peer and group work give students “more chances to interact.” Participant 4 emphasized peer and group work where students “negotiate meaning,” and Participant 9 shared that students work in pairs or groups “to use English in context.” These responses suggest that teachers used collaboration to increase student participation and reduce the pressure of individual performance.

Problem-solving tasks were likewise used to make communication purposeful. Participant 2 created situations where students “must use English to solve problems,” while Participant 4 used tasks that required students to use language “with a clear purpose.” Participant 8 emphasized that the main goal of such tasks is “communication,” and Participant 10 used oral exercises that required students to “respond critically.” These practices show that language was used not only for recitation but also for reasoning, decision-making, and task completion.

Warm-up and reflection activities were also integrated to prepare students for communicative learning. Participant 2 mentioned using “a warm-up conversation, vocabulary introduction, and group activity,” while Participant 9 described warm-up activities that introduced “a real-life scenario or problem.” Participant 8 noted that CLT could be incorporated during the application part of the lesson and even during motivation. These practices helped teachers connect lessons to context before students engaged in deeper language tasks.

These findings suggest that teachers used diverse CLT activities to increase student talk time, encourage interaction, and make English use more purposeful. The implication is that communicative activities should remain varied and scaffolded so that students can gradually develop fluency, confidence, and critical thinking through repeated language use.

Theme 2: Real-Life Context Integration

The second theme highlights the teachers’ efforts to connect English learning with real-life situations. The subthemes under this theme were everyday situations, social or moral issues, personal relevance, and immersive use of English. These findings show that teachers attempted to make language instruction more meaningful by linking classroom activities to situations students may encounter outside school.

Everyday situations were commonly used to make lessons practical. Participant 3 shared, “I incorporate real-life situations like asking for directions,” while Participant 2 mentioned topics such as “shopping, travelling, and job interviews.” Participant 8 used examples such as “making phone calls, talking with friends, or expressing opinions,” and Participant 9 referred to “daily conversations” involving proper questioning and answering. These statements show that teachers used familiar situations to help students see English as a tool for actual communication.

Some teachers also used social and moral issues to deepen classroom interaction. Participant 5 shared, “We discuss issues like abortion, pre-sex marriage, bullying,” while Participant 8 mentioned a discussion on “moral issues, specifically gay marriage.” Participant 9 also referred to lessons involving different social issues. These examples show that teachers used sensitive or thought-provoking topics to allow students to express opinions, justify ideas, and engage in meaningful discussion.

Personal relevance was another important subtheme. Participant 5 emphasized the need to “relate to real life context,” while Participant 8 used situations where students would “actually use the language outside the classroom.” Participant 4 also observed that connecting lessons to everyday scenarios enhances student engagement. This suggests that students are more likely to participate when the topic is connected to their experiences, interests, or future needs.

Teachers also promoted immersive use of English. Participant 1 stated, “I encourage ‘English Only Policy’ even outside of my classroom.” Participant 6 shared that most activities were connected to actual situations, while Participant 4 emphasized applying English in situations students are likely to encounter outside the classroom. These responses show that some teachers attempted to extend language use beyond a single classroom activity and into a broader communicative environment.

These findings indicate that teachers recognized the importance of authenticity in CLT. By using real-life scenarios, social issues, personally relevant tasks, and English immersion, teachers helped students understand language as something functional and meaningful. The implication is that real-life context integration should be strengthened because it makes English learning more relevant, motivates participation, and supports practical communicative competence.

Theme 3: Instructional Materials Used

The third theme focuses on the instructional materials teachers used to support CLT. Two subthemes emerged: authentic materials and technology-enhanced materials. These findings show that teachers selected materials not only to deliver content but also to create meaningful contexts for communication.

Authentic materials were used to expose students to real-world language. Participant 3 mentioned using “workbooks or articles and videos,” while Participant 8 used “brochures, videos, and real-world texts.” Participant 10 referred to “authentic materials like videos, articles,” and Participant 1 used reading materials “relevant to daily life communication.” These responses show that teachers valued materials that reflect actual language use and help students connect classroom learning with real communicative situations.

Technology-enhanced materials were also used to make lessons more interactive and engaging. Participant 1 mentioned the use of “PowerPoint, cards, and reading materials,” while Participant 6 used a “projector” and “slideshow” to provide context. Participant 9 referred to “Smart TV” and “YouTube about daily conversations,” while Participant 10 mentioned a “language app” and “online collaboration platforms.” These tools allowed teachers to present language visually, provide examples of real communication, and increase student engagement.

These findings suggest that teachers were resourceful in using both available and technology-supported materials to make CLT more concrete and engaging. Their use of videos, articles, brochures, slideshows, and online platforms indicates a shift from purely textbook-based instruction toward multimodal and contextualized learning. The implication is that schools should support teachers by providing access to authentic materials and basic digital resources that can strengthen communicative language instruction.

Theme 4: Fluency and Accuracy Balance

The fourth theme describes how teachers managed fluency and accuracy in CLT-based lessons. Three subthemes emerged: focus on fluency first then accuracy, simultaneous fluency and accuracy, and fluency prioritized. These findings show that teachers varied in how they handled students’ errors, but most recognized the importance of both communication and correctness.

Some teachers preferred a fluency-first approach. Participant 6 explained, “Focus on fluency... then give feedback... to improve accuracy.” Participant 8 similarly stated, “Focus first in fluency and give impact on grammar and vocabulary,” while Participant 9 allowed students to “speak freely without too much interruption and correction.” This approach helped students express ideas first before focusing on errors, which may reduce anxiety and build confidence.

Other teachers tried to develop fluency and accuracy together. Participant 1 stated, “Balance fluency and accuracy in CLT-based lessons,” while Participant 4 used both “fluency exercises” and “accuracy-focused tasks to reinforce correct language use.” Participant 3 also mentioned gradually offering assistance focused on accuracy. These responses show that some teachers viewed fluency and accuracy as connected rather than separate goals.

A few teachers prioritized fluency more strongly. Participant 5 shared, “I am more focused on fluency... not more on accuracy.” Participant 6 also mentioned giving accuracy support through “on-the-spot” questioning, while Participant 7 referred to language modeling by giving students examples. These responses suggest that even when fluency was prioritized, teachers still recognized the need to guide students toward clearer and more accurate expression.

These findings indicate that teachers used flexible approaches in balancing fluency and accuracy. In CLT, this balance is important because students must be encouraged to communicate freely while also receiving enough support to improve grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. The implication is that teachers need continued training in designing communicative tasks that promote fluency without neglecting accuracy, especially in speaking and writing instruction.

Overall, the findings for the second research question show that teachers implemented CLT through varied classroom practices and activities. They used role plays, simulations, debates, discussions, peer work, problem-solving tasks, real-life contexts, authentic materials, technology-supported tools, and flexible fluency-accuracy strategies. These practices demonstrate that teachers were actively applying CLT principles by creating opportunities for interaction, contextualized learning, purposeful communication, and practical English use.

Challenges that Teachers Encountered in Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in Teaching Speaking and Writing

The third research question examined the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing Communicative Language Teaching, particularly in teaching speaking and writing. Five themes emerged from the participants’ responses: learner-related challenges, classroom and contextual constraints, speaking-specific challenges, writing-specific challenges, and teacher adaptation and coping strategies. These themes indicate that CLT implementation was shaped by both learner factors and classroom realities, but the teachers also demonstrated flexibility in adjusting their practices to sustain communicative instruction.

Theme 1: Learner-Related Challenges

Learner-related challenges were the most immediate barriers to CLT implementation. These challenges included low English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, low confidence, reluctance, and personality-related barriers. Since CLT requires students to speak, interact, write, and express ideas, learners’ limited language ability and hesitation directly affected their participation in communicative tasks.

Several teachers observed that students had difficulty using English because of weak grammar, limited vocabulary, and low fluency. Participant 1 stated, “Most of my learners are not fluent speakers and writers of English Language.” Participant 3 similarly explained that it was difficult to teach students who “know nothing about basic grammar and oral fluency,” while Participant 5 noted, “They cannot express well because they don’t know the grammar, they lack vocabulary.” These statements show that students’ limited language foundation made CLT difficult to carry out, especially when activities required spontaneous speaking or independent writing.

Fear of making mistakes also limited student participation. Participant 2 observed that students were “shy or afraid of making statements and speaking,” while Participant 3 noted that some learners were hesitant because they feared being “grammatically incorrect.” Participant 6 added that many students were “afraid to share their ideas because they worry about making mistakes.” These responses suggest that students’ anxiety was not only linguistic but also emotional, as they feared embarrassment or correction in front of others.

Reluctance and personality barriers further affected participation. Participant 9 described a learner who “just wanted to sit in the corner and listen,” while Participant 6 shared that code-switching was sometimes allowed to encourage students “to express themselves freely.” This shows that teachers recognized the need to reduce pressure and provide learners with more accessible ways to participate.

These findings suggest that CLT cannot be implemented effectively if students are not yet confident or prepared to use English communicatively. While CLT encourages active language use, teachers must first provide scaffolding, vocabulary support, grammar support, and low-risk opportunities for participation. The finding implies that teachers should create a supportive classroom culture where mistakes are treated as part of learning and where learners gradually build confidence in speaking and writing.

Theme 2: Classroom and Contextual Constraints

The second theme refers to classroom and contextual constraints that limited the full implementation of CLT. These included large class sizes, limited time, curriculum and assessment misalignment, and lack of instructional resources. Unlike learner-related challenges, these barriers came from the structure and conditions of the teaching environment.

Large class size made it difficult for teachers to provide sufficient speaking opportunities and individual feedback. Participant 2 stated, “It’s hard to give my students time to speak in large classes,” while Participant 4 explained that large classes made it difficult to give “individual attention.” Since CLT depends on interaction, monitoring, and feedback, overcrowded classrooms reduced the amount of meaningful participation each student could receive.

Time limitation was another constraint. Participant 2 referred to “the limited time like the 45 minutes to run the lesson,” especially when incorporating CLT activities. This suggests that communicative tasks may require more preparation, performance time, and feedback than traditional teacher-centered activities. When class periods are short, teachers may be forced to reduce interaction or prioritize lesson coverage.

Teachers also identified curriculum and assessment demands as barriers. Participant 2 stated that “the curriculum, or even the exam, focuses more on grammar rather than communication,” while Participant 10 shared that CLT may be set aside because of the need to achieve curriculum competencies. This reveals a tension between communicative teaching and grammar-oriented assessment systems. Although teachers valued CLT, external requirements sometimes pushed them back toward traditional instruction.

Resource limitations also affected CLT implementation. Participant 2 mentioned the difficulty of lacking “television” and “internet connection.” However, some teachers showed resourcefulness, as Participants 6 and 10 emphasized that teachers “can always find ways.” This contrast suggests that resources can support CLT, but teacher creativity remains important when materials are limited.

These findings indicate that CLT implementation is not only a matter of teacher willingness. It is also affected by class size, schedule, curriculum design, assessment expectations, and available materials. The implication is that schools should support CLT through more flexible instructional planning, communicative assessment practices, adequate resources, and technical assistance for teachers handling large and diverse classes.

Theme 3: Speaking-Specific Challenges

The third theme focused on challenges specific to speaking. Although speaking is central to CLT, teachers reported that many students struggled with oral communication because of limited fluency,

hesitation, and lack of confidence. These difficulties were especially visible during classroom activities that required students to speak in front of others or respond spontaneously.

Participant 5 stated, “They cannot speak well... in English,” while Participant 3 observed that students had difficulty speaking the language fluently. Participant 4 also noted that some students were shy to communicate using English, and Participant 6 observed that learners became hesitant to speak. These statements show that students’ speaking difficulties involved both language ability and confidence.

To address this, some teachers used structured participation strategies. Participant 10 assigned roles such as “leader, presenter, secretary” to keep students engaged. This strategy helped distribute responsibility among group members and reduced the pressure of unstructured oral performance.

These findings suggest that speaking activities in CLT must be carefully scaffolded. Students need repeated, low-pressure opportunities to speak before they can participate confidently in more complex communicative tasks. The implication is that teachers should use pair work, role assignments, guided speaking tasks, modeling, and positive reinforcement to help learners gradually develop oral fluency and confidence.

Theme 4: Writing-Specific Challenges

The fourth theme focused on challenges specific to writing. Teachers observed that students struggled with sentence structure, grammar, idea organization, and confidence in expressing thoughts in written form. These difficulties show that writing under CLT requires both communicative purpose and structural support.

Participant 3 noted that students experienced “difficulty in structure,” while Participant 4 stated that students lacked confidence in expressing their ideas clearly and fluently in writing. Participant 2 observed that some students did not know how to write “messages,” “reflections,” or “essays,” while Participant 5 explained that students struggled with “sentence structure” and “grammar.” These statements indicate that writing difficulties were not limited to grammar; they also involved organizing ideas for different written purposes.

One response also pointed to the need for process-based writing. Participant 10 shared the use of “brainstorming, drafting, revising,” showing that writing instruction became more manageable when students were guided through stages rather than expected to produce a complete output immediately.

These findings imply that CLT-based writing instruction must combine meaningful communication with explicit support. Teachers need to provide models, vocabulary support, sentence-level guidance, feedback, and opportunities for revision. A process-oriented approach may help students develop both confidence and competence in writing.

Theme 5: Teacher Adaptation and Coping Strategies

The fifth theme shows that teachers were not passive in facing the challenges of CLT implementation. Instead, they adapted their practices through differentiated and grouped activities, technology use, feedback and process-oriented approaches, and supportive classroom strategies. These adaptations helped teachers respond to learner needs and classroom limitations.

Teachers used differentiated and collaborative tasks to make CLT more manageable. Participant 1 mentioned the use of grammar games to practice spoken and written skills, while Participant 3 used group writing or projects. Participant 10 divided students into smaller groups or pairs, and Participant 4 used structured peer or group activities where each student had a specific role. These strategies helped increase participation and reduce the difficulty of managing communicative tasks in larger or mixed-ability classes.

Technology was also used as a coping strategy. Participant 1 used technology to maximize time, Participant 7 used video-recorded activities, and Participant 4 used online platforms to manage large groups. These practices show that digital tools helped teachers extend participation, provide alternative performance formats, and organize communicative activities more efficiently.

Feedback and process-oriented instruction were also important. Participant 6 stated, “I check their output and then give feedback,” while Participant 10 emphasized “brainstorming, drafting, revising, and rewriting.” Participant 4 also used peer editing to encourage interaction while reducing pressure. These responses show that teachers supported both speaking and writing through gradual improvement rather than one-time performance.

Finally, teachers emphasized the importance of a safe and encouraging classroom environment. Participant 4 used positive reinforcement and gradually increased speaking opportunities, while Participants 6 and 10 promoted a classroom culture where mistakes are seen as part of learning. Participant 9 added, “I encourage them in a nice way.” These practices reveal that emotional support is essential in CLT because students are more likely to participate when they feel safe and respected.

Overall, the findings show that teachers encountered substantial challenges in implementing CLT in speaking and writing, but they also demonstrated adaptability. Learners’ low proficiency, fear of mistakes, hesitation, and writing difficulties limited participation, while class size, time, curriculum demands, and resources affected classroom implementation. However, teachers responded through grouping strategies, differentiated activities, technology, feedback, process-based instruction, and supportive classroom environments. These findings suggest that effective CLT implementation requires not only teacher competence but also institutional support, learner scaffolding, and classroom conditions that encourage meaningful communication.

Recommendations for Strengthening Communicative Language Teaching Implementation

The fourth research question focused on the recommendations that may be proposed based on the findings of the study. The results suggest that strengthening CLT implementation requires support not only for teachers but also for learners, curriculum practices, assessment systems, instructional resources, and school-level conditions. Based on the themes that emerged from the study, the recommendations may be organized into five major areas: professional development, curriculum and assessment alignment, instructional resource support, learner-centered classroom support, and institutional assistance for sustainable CLT implementation.

Theme 1: Strengthening Teacher Professional Development

The first recommendation emphasizes the need for regular professional development on both the theory and practice of Communicative Language Teaching. The findings showed that teachers generally had positive perceptions of CLT and already used several communicative strategies; however, some teachers applied these practices intuitively without fully recognizing their theoretical basis. This indicates a need for structured training that helps teachers connect their existing practices with CLT principles.

Training may include workshops, Learning Action Cell sessions, collaborative expertise sessions, and peer-sharing activities focused on CLT principles, task-based language teaching, authentic communication strategies, and the teaching of speaking and writing. These activities may help teachers distinguish CLT from traditional grammar-centered approaches and design lessons that promote fluency, interaction, autonomy, and meaningful language use.

This recommendation implies that professional development should not simply introduce CLT as a new method. Instead, it should help teachers refine the communicative practices they already use and apply them more intentionally. Regular training may also reduce the gap between intuitive classroom practice and formal pedagogical knowledge.

Theme 2: Aligning Curriculum, Materials, and Assessment with CLT Principles

The second recommendation concerns the alignment of curriculum, learning materials, and assessment with CLT principles. The findings showed that teachers experienced tension between communicative instruction and grammar-focused curriculum or examination demands. This suggests that

CLT implementation may remain limited if the curriculum and assessment system continue to emphasize grammatical accuracy more than communicative competence.

Curriculum developers, school heads, master teachers, and English teachers may review lesson materials, learning competencies, and assessment practices to ensure that they include task-based, functional, and communicative activities. Instead of focusing mainly on grammar-heavy tests, assessment should include role plays, presentations, group discussions, simulations, peer activities, process-based writing tasks, and other performance-based outputs.

This recommendation implies that CLT should be supported not only at the classroom level but also at the curriculum and assessment level. When learning materials and assessments reflect communicative objectives, teachers are more likely to implement CLT consistently and students are more likely to develop practical language competence.

Theme 3: Expanding Access to Authentic and Technology-Enhanced Instructional Resources

The third recommendation highlights the need to improve teachers' access to authentic, real-world, and technology-enhanced instructional materials. The findings showed that teachers used videos, articles, brochures, reading materials, PowerPoint presentations, projectors, Smart TVs, YouTube clips, language applications, and online platforms to support communicative learning. However, lack of resources such as internet connection, television, and digital tools was also identified as a challenge.

Schools may establish a shared repository of CLT materials such as videos, realia, podcasts, articles, brochures, speaking prompts, writing templates, and task-based lesson activities. Teachers may also be trained in using ICT tools that support speaking and writing tasks, such as collaborative platforms, digital presentation tools, recorded speaking activities, and online feedback systems.

This recommendation implies that authentic and technology-supported materials can make CLT more concrete, engaging, and relevant to learners. Providing teachers with accessible resources may help reduce textbook dependence and support more contextualized, multimodal, and student-centered English instruction.

Theme 4: Creating Supportive Classroom Environments for Speaking and Writing

The fourth recommendation focuses on creating classroom environments that reduce learner anxiety and encourage active participation. The findings showed that students' low proficiency, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, shyness, and lack of confidence hindered their participation in speaking and writing activities. These learner-related challenges suggest that CLT implementation requires emotional support as much as instructional planning.

Teachers may use low-risk speaking activities, pair work, group tasks, role assignments, code-switching when necessary, positive reinforcement, and gradual speaking opportunities. In writing, teachers may use process-based instruction, including brainstorming, drafting, revising, peer editing, and feedback. These strategies can help learners build confidence while still improving fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and organization.

This recommendation implies that students should not be forced immediately into complex communicative tasks without support. CLT should be scaffolded so learners can gradually participate, make mistakes safely, and improve through repeated practice and constructive feedback.

Theme 5: Providing Institutional Support for Sustainable CLT Implementation

The fifth recommendation emphasizes the role of school leadership and institutional support in sustaining CLT implementation. The findings showed that teachers encountered classroom and contextual barriers such as large class sizes, limited time, rigid curriculum demands, limited resources, and lack of individual feedback opportunities. These challenges cannot be solved by teachers alone.

School heads and master teachers may provide technical assistance, mentoring, peer observation, coaching, and collaborative planning time. Where possible, schools may also consider flexible scheduling,

smaller activity groups, dedicated time for CLT planning, and opportunities for English use beyond the classroom through English zones or school-wide communicative activities.

This recommendation implies that CLT implementation requires shared responsibility. Teachers need institutional conditions that allow communicative instruction to happen meaningfully. When school leaders provide time, resources, mentoring, and a supportive instructional culture, teachers can implement CLT more confidently and consistently.

Overall, the recommendations indicate that strengthening CLT implementation requires a coordinated effort among teachers, school heads, master teachers, curriculum developers, and education supervisors. Professional development can address gaps in teachers' theoretical understanding; curriculum and assessment alignment can support communicative goals; authentic and technology-enhanced resources can enrich instruction; supportive classroom environments can reduce learner anxiety; and institutional assistance can sustain implementation. Together, these recommendations may help improve the teaching of speaking and writing through more meaningful and context-responsive Communicative Language Teaching.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Existing Literature

The findings show that teachers generally perceived Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as a learner-centered and communication-focused approach that promotes fluency, confidence, interaction, and real-life language use. This supports the central principle of CLT that language learning becomes more meaningful when students use English for authentic communication rather than memorizing language rules alone. The teachers' use of role plays, discussions, group work, simulations, real-life situations, and authentic materials further indicates that CLT is already present in their classroom practices.

However, the study also revealed that some teachers used CLT strategies unconsciously, suggesting a gap between actual classroom practice and formal theoretical understanding. While teachers were already applying communicative activities, they did not always recognize these as part of CLT. This finding highlights the need for professional development that helps teachers connect their existing practices with CLT principles and implement them more intentionally.

The challenges identified in the study also confirm that CLT implementation depends on both learner readiness and classroom conditions. Students' low English proficiency, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence affected their participation in speaking and writing tasks. At the same time, large class sizes, limited time, curriculum demands, assessment misalignment, and lack of resources restricted teachers' ability to provide sufficient communicative practice and feedback.

Despite these difficulties, teachers demonstrated adaptability by using group work, differentiated activities, technology, feedback, peer editing, process-based writing, role assignments, and positive reinforcement. These findings suggest that effective CLT implementation requires more than teacher effort alone. It also requires institutional support through training, curriculum and assessment alignment, access to authentic and digital materials, and supportive classroom environments that allow students to use English confidently and meaningfully.

Methodological Limitation and Future Research Direction

This study was limited to Junior High School English teachers in public secondary schools within Mobo South District. Since the participants came from one district only, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of teachers in other districts, provinces, or educational contexts. The study also focused only on teachers' perspectives and did not include students, school administrators, or curriculum planners, whose views could have provided a broader understanding of CLT implementation.

The study specifically examined CLT in relation to speaking and writing; therefore, it did not deeply explore how CLT is applied in listening and reading instruction. Future studies may include a wider group of participants, such as learners and school leaders, and may be conducted in other school contexts to

compare CLT practices and challenges. Classroom observations and document analysis may also be included to strengthen the findings and provide a more complete picture of how CLT is actually implemented in English classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Junior High School English teachers in Mobo South District generally perceived Communicative Language Teaching as a student-centered and communication-driven approach that supports fluency, confidence, interaction, and real-world language use. Although teachers showed favorable understanding and practice of CLT, some implemented its strategies intuitively, revealing a need to strengthen their formal theoretical and pedagogical knowledge.

The findings also show that teachers applied CLT through role plays, simulations, discussions, group work, problem-solving tasks, real-life contexts, authentic materials, and technology-supported instruction. These practices reflect an effort to make English learning more interactive, meaningful, and connected to actual communication. However, implementation was affected by learners' low English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, limited confidence, large class sizes, time constraints, curriculum demands, assessment misalignment, and limited resources.

Despite these challenges, teachers demonstrated adaptability by using differentiated activities, group strategies, feedback, process-based writing, technology, and supportive classroom practices. Therefore, effective CLT implementation requires not only teacher initiative but also sustained professional development, curriculum and assessment alignment, access to instructional resources, learner support, and institutional assistance.

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